

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A commercial potato shipping container, comprising:
a multi-layer paper bale for shipping bulk quantities of potatoes and configured for use with an automated potato bale-filling apparatus, the paper bale having sufficient size to receive and sufficient strength to retain during shipping a plurality of consumer sized bags of potatoes and having:
 - an elongated front panel;
 - an elongated flat back panel;
 - elongated left and right side panels adjoining the front and back panels;
 - a closed bottom panel joining the front and back panels with the left and right side panels;
 - an open top portion;
 - an aperture in the back panel proximate the top portion with the back panel having a continuous perimeter surrounding the aperture;
 - and
 - a cut-away portion in the front panel proximate the top portion to expose the aperture wherein the aperture is in the back panel only.
2. The bag of claim 1 wherein the aperture is in the back panel substantially midway between the left and right side panels.
3. The bag of claim 1 wherein the aperture is substantially circular in shape.

4. The bag of claim 1, further comprising a plurality of ventilation openings in the front and back panels.

5. The bag of claim 1 wherein the side panels have elongated creases along the side panels centrally located between the front and back panels and the front panel has a crease proximate the bottom panel to facilitate folding.

6. The bag of claim 1 wherein the front and back panels and left and right side panels have a length of approximately thirty-two inches.

7. The bag of claim 1 wherein the front and back panels have a width of approximately thirteen inches.

8. The bag of claim 1 wherein the left and right panels have a width of approximately seven inches.

9. The bag of claim 1 wherein the aperture is substantially circular in shape and has a diameter of approximately 0.625 inches.

10. A commercial potato shipping container for use with an automated bag-filling apparatus having a protruding member positioned to retain the shipping container in a substantially vertical orientation, comprising:

a multi-layer paper bale for shipping bulk quantities of potatoes and configured for use with an automated potato bale-filling apparatus, the paper bale having sufficient size to receive and sufficient strength to retain during shipping a plurality of consumer sized bags of potatoes and having:

first and second opposing panels having an unfolded upper portion;

first and second opposing side panels adjoining the first and second opposing panels;

a closed bottom panel joining the first and second opposing panels with the first and second opposing side panels;

an open top portion;

an aperture in the unfolded upper portion of the first opposing panel proximate the top portion with the first opposing panel having a continuous perimeter surrounding the aperture, the aperture sized to slideably fit onto the protruding member; and

a cut-away portion in the second opposing panel proximate the top portion to expose the aperture wherein the aperture is in the first opposing panel only.

11. A method of manufacturing a commercial potato shipping container for use with an automated bag-filling apparatus, comprising:

folding a multi-layer piece of paper having elongated first and second free end portions to form an elongated front panel and an elongated flat back panel and elongated left and right side panels adjoining the front and back panels;

forming left, right, front and back flaps by cutting a portion of the folded paper at a first end of the left, right, front and back panels at the folds between the left, right, front and back panels;

coupling the elongated free end portions to each other;

folding the left and right side flaps toward each other;

folding front and back flaps toward each other and over the left and right side flaps to form a bottom panel of a paper bale;

sealing the left, right, front and back flaps to form the paper bale with sufficient size to receive and sufficient strength to retain during shipping a plurality of consumer sized bags of potatoes;

placing an aperture in the back panel at a second end opposite the first end, the aperture being placed in a portion of the back panel with the back panel having a continuous perimeter surrounding the aperture; and

removing a portion in the front panel proximate the top portion to expose the aperture wherein the aperture is in the back panel only.

12. The method of claim 11 wherein the aperture is in the back panel substantially midway between the left and right side panels.

13. The method of claim 11 wherein the aperture is substantially circular in shape.

14. The method of claim 11, further comprising placing a plurality of ventilation openings in the front and back panels.

15. The method of claim 11, further comprising creating elongated creases along the left and right panels centrally located between the front and back panels and the front panel has a crease proximate the bottom panel to facilitate folding.